

K-12 SCHOOL QUARANTINE

Introduction

Central District Health recognizes the value of in-person learning and the challenge of balancing the risks of COVID-19 and educational, social, and emotional supports. While COVID-19 is circulating in the United States, measures need to be taken in order to ensure that schools operate in a way that minimizes risk to students, staff, and the community.

The following are Central District Health's recommendations for quarantining school-aged children who have been exposed to a person who has tested positive, or is diagnosed, with COVID-19 (case).

Instructional Areas (e.g. standard classroom-like environment with teacher in front of the room and students are seated)

If both the case and the contact were wearing masks 1) that cover the nose and mouth and 2) were worn consistently during the exposure period, then:

- The case must isolate at home as recommended by public health.
- **The contact does not need to quarantine*, but should continue to wear a mask and monitor for symptoms.**

**These students do not need to quarantine from school or extracurricular activities, but do need to quarantine from the community.*

Non-instructional Areas (e.g. before or after school, sports, extra-curricular activities, cafeteria)

- All unvaccinated contacts are required to quarantine.

Policy Considerations

- In the event of an exposure the school should have a protocol in place to verify vaccination status. Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine.
- Contact tracing should continue throughout the school as sick individuals are identified
- School reporting of close contacts of a case should continue
- School notification to students, families, and staff of exposure should continue
- All contacts should maintain physical distancing and wear a face covering

CDH recommends remaining extra vigilant in monitoring health and staying home if feeling ill, especially if under recommended quarantine.

CDH recommends that schools provide clear communication to their communities about the risks and benefits associated with having exposed teachers or staff participate in the school setting.

What is Quarantine?

Quarantine refers to the practice of separating individuals who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 to determine whether they develop symptoms or test positive for the disease. Quarantine also reduces the risk of transmission if an individual is later found to have COVID-19. Quarantine for COVID-19 should last for a period of 7-14 days after the exposure has ended. Ideally, each quarantined individual should be quarantined in a single location.

Quarantine includes not leaving the quarantine location to attend activities, school, childcare, work, or visiting the community or having visitors at the location of quarantine. The exception is to seek medical care.

Additional Resources

How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

When to Quarantine | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>